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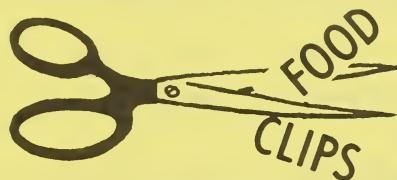
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# Food and Home Notes

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
OFFICE OF COMMUNICATION WASHINGTON, D. C.

December 3, 1973



Watching your budget? Cheese spread from a pressurized can costs more than cheese spread from a jar. And -- grated cheeses and wrapped cheese slices cost more than equal amounts of the same cheese in wedges or sticks.

\* \* \*

What is "cured meat"? The meat is treated with curing ingredients -- primarily salt and sugar. Then the meat is heat processed.

\* \* \*

What cuts of beef are frequently cured? Brisket (called corned beef when cured), the tongue, and some sausages and luncheon meats that contain beef. Dried beef is usually made from the round.

\* \* \*

Fresh cabbage, potatoes and watermelon are inexpensive (usually) sources of vitamin C. Canned citrus juices, canned sauerkraut, and tomatoes also are important sources -- and relatively inexpensive according to U.S. Department of Agriculture home economists.

## In This Issue:

- 1 Cranberries
- 2 Outlook Conference Schedule
- 3/4 How To Buy  
—A Christmas Tree

## ON CRANBERRIES

### —Plenty To Do Your Own Thing!

Cranberries were once served mostly at Thanksgiving or Christmas -- usually as whole-berry sauce, or molded jelly -- but weren't served very often at any other time of the year. They were usually purchased fresh, by the pound, or quart, from a large wooden barrel in the store, made into a sauce or jelly, or put aside for stringing on the Christmas tree.

But, that was yesterday. Cranberries are now an "anytime" berry and used for sherbet-making, on biscuits, in relishes, puddings, cookies, and in salads. Cranberry juice cocktails and cranberry bread are two of the more recent favorites.

A generous new crop of cranberries is available this year. The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates production at about 2,120,000 barrels. Fresh berries usually hold well for 4 to 8 weeks (without freezing) if you keep them in the refrigerator (36-40 degrees). But, if you like, you can freeze them and extend their life for many months. Cranberries may be frozen right in their see-through film packages "as is."

Dec. 3, 1973

The 1974 Outlook  
Annual Agricultural Outlook Conference  
December 17-19, 1973

## FAMILY LIVING SESSIONS

Tuesday afternoon, December 18, 1973 "The Outlook for Family Living"

1:30 Energy: Prices and availability  
2:15 Housing: Prices and availability  
3:00 Intermission  
3:15 Clothing and textiles: Prices and supplies  
4:00 Food: Prices, consumption, and expenditures

Wednesday morning, December 19, 1973 "Meeting Family Concerns"

8:45 Coordination of Consumer Affairs in the USDA  
9:30 Food safety, food education, food economics: Panel

Proper handling and storage of food  
Food additives and fortification  
Nutrient labeling  
Home produced food  
Freezer food concerns  
USDA regulatory procedures for meat and poultry  
Standardizing of labels and terminology for meat products

Wednesday afternoon, December 19, 1973 "Meeting Family Concerns"

1:30 Clothing, energy, and housing: Panel

Sanitation in home laundering  
Energy conservation in and around the home  
Solving the technical problems in housing and energy

3:00 Adjournment

## ON SELECTING A TREE

## —For Christmas

The basic one-two-threes for buying a yule tree can be helpful if you know what procedures to follow, according to marketing specialists at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Choosing a tree that is "just right" for your family will be easier if you know which species you are looking for, the different features that indicate a good tree, and how to select one to maintain freshness.

A Balsam fir has short, flat, dark green needles, usually rounded at the tips. Another short needled one, the Douglas fir, has needles that are attached around the twig instead of in the feather-like arrangement of the Balsam. Needles are short-stalked, soft and pliable and are dark yellow-green or blue-green.

You can identify the Eastern red cedar because it is so different from the other Christmas tree species. It has extremely short, dark blue-green, scalelike leaves.

The Scotch pine has needles longer than the Balsam and Douglas firs. Its needles grow in clusters of two and are dark blue-green in color. Then there are White Pines with silvery blue-green needles that are soft to the touch. Their needles are short and stout.

Over a decade ago, the U.S. Department of Agriculture established voluntary standards of quality for Christmas trees. Trees meeting a U.S. grade will have these characteristics, since the grade standards require that the trees be: Fresh, clean, healthy, well trimmed and well shaped.

There are three grades:

U.S. Premium—not less than medium density, normal taper, and all four faces (sides) free from any type of damage.

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-3-

## ON SELECTING A CHRISTMAS TREE (cont.)

U.S. No. 1 or U.S. Choice: Not less than medium density, normal taper, and three damage free faces.

U.S. No. 2 or U.S. Standard: Light or better density, candlestick, normal or flaring taper; and at least two adjacent damage-free faces.

Most of these voluntary standards are used by the wholesale trade. However, they can be used with good results by anyone to determine the quality of a tree. If you're placing your tree in a corner, you only need the "good" faces to the room—so the other faces just won't count.....and a No. 2 tree would do fine.

First, you need to determine where you will locate your tree in the home—which corner, nook or a center position. The height of the room should be considered. It's better to buy the right height than to plan to have to cut a huge top or bottom off.

Freshness is the important key -- needles should be resilient, but not brittle. Shake or bounce the tree on the ground to see if the needles are firmly attached. The limbs should be strong enough to hold ornaments and strings of electric lights. The tree should have a strong fragrance and good green color for its species.

Then, keep it outside until you are ready to set it up to trim. Cut the butt of the tree at a diagonal about one inch above the original cut—this allows the pores to open to absorb water. Place the butt in the container of water. Watch the safety features—support the tree, place away from radiators, electric heaters. Don't use open flames (such as lighted candles) on or near the tree. And don't leave the Christmas tree lights on when you leave your home. Remember, safety first.

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